



PRESS RELEASE

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Police Seek Suspects in Lottery Scam Thefts

Riverside, CA -- The Riverside Police Department is asking the public for assistance in identifying two individuals responsible for at least four thefts throughout the City of Riverside. The thefts occurred between February 28, 2012 and March 13, 2012, and in all instances the targeted victims were Spanish speaking Hispanic females.

The suspects, a male and a female are described as follows:

- 1) A clean-cut, well-dressed White or Hispanic male in his forties, approximately 5'-6" tall, 200 pounds.
- 2) The second suspect is described as a female Hispanic (possible Columbian accent), sixty-five to seventy-five years old, having a light complexion, 5'02"-5'04" tall with a thin frame, black and grey shoulder length hair worn in a ponytail, green eyes and bad teeth. The suspect's vehicle is described as a gray or light colored SUV, possibly a Toyota-4-Runner.

The suspects commit the thefts by contacting female victims and employing a lottery ticket type scam. The suspects convince the victims that they have or can obtain a winning lottery ticket and promise to share the winnings with the victims if they produce cash for their portion of the winnings. The victims are then convinced to enter the suspects' vehicle and accompany them to a lawyer's office but are first convinced to produce cash from their bank or are robbed of cash from their person before being released, without ever arriving at a lawyer's office. The suspects then flee in their vehicle with the victim's cash.

On one occasion the suspects contacted a female victim near the 6000 block of Magnolia Ave. in the City of Riverside, employed the scam, and attempted to get the victim to give them a ride to a law office. In this case the suspects entered the victim's vehicle and made her drive to a nearby bank and withdraw cash. The suspects later exited the victim's vehicle in a nearby area before fleeing with the victim's cash. It is unknown if the suspects were armed during these incidents. No weapons have been seen.

Citizens should be aware that there are many scams employed by criminals who may contact them in person, phone, or via the Internet. In this case the suspects exploited the victim's trust and desire to win a lottery. Be aware of your surroundings, be leery if it sounds too good to be true and notify police if you suspect that someone is conducting an illegal scam or theft.

Anyone with information that may help identify these suspects should contact Detective Dave Smith (951) 353-7103 or Detective Greg Rowe (951) 353-7136.